



# NEWS



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## Editorial: Ignoring evacuation orders heightens danger

Press Enterprise

Posted: August 24, 2016, 7:11 PM

After a valiant, week-long struggle, weary firefighters contained the devastating Blue Cut fire on Tuesday.

The fire destroyed more than a hundred homes and a couple of hundred other structures, and ranks as the 20th most destructive blaze in California's flame-filled history, according to CalFire.

Firefighters applied gel to 107 structures they knew they wouldn't be able to defend, and only three of those were destroyed, **San Bernardino County Fire** Chief Mark Hartwig said. A couple of county bulldozers cut a 50-foot-wide break that kept the blaze from entering Wrightwood on Aug. 17.

We lost some iconic, historic buildings: The Summit Inn, the landmark diner in the Cajon Pass, and two of the county's oldest structures: the Earp cabin and a barn on the Clyde Ranch.

No human lives were lost. That seems quite fortunate, especially since about half the people told they should evacuate by San Bernardino County sheriff's deputies ignored the suggestion.

That's a problem, or at least it figures to be in some future fire. Because today's fires are not your father's fire, according to those who fight them.

Over and over again, some grizzled firefighter or another who has been battling wildfires for 20 or 30 years has said, referring to the Blue Cut or another of the fires that have scorched California's earth this year, that he's "never seen a fire act like this" or "never seen a fire move so fast."

That's a lesson that we in Southern California need to learn. In our fifth year of bone-dry drought, wildfires burn more aggressively, move faster and change directions more quickly than we're used to.

"It's almost like the mountains are just doused in gasoline," said a CalFire captain fighting the Chimney fire near Hearst Castle.

That means people in evacuation zones who elect to stay at home could well wind up facing a raging fire that closes in faster than they could imagine, perhaps leaving them no way out. Or a fire that changes direction with such speed that they're overtaken as they attempt to escape.

Staying in an evacuation zone puts not only your life at risk, but those of firefighters and deputies who might have to decide whether it's worth the risk to try to save you. Don't put them in that spot.

<http://www.pe.com/articles/fire-811519-county-firefighters.html>

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## **Public health officials warn of food safety after wildfire**

*Heat, fumes, chemicals can wreak havoc on food, cookware*

**Victor Valley Daily Press**

Posted: August 26, 2016, 8:16 AM

Public health officials have a warning for BlueCut Fire evacuees who've returned home in the past week: Three factors can compromise food exposed to fire.

Any combination of the heat of the fire, smoke fumes and chemicals used to fight a blaze generally means that saving food that's been in a fire "is not a good idea," San Bernardino County public health officials say.

The toxic fumes released from burning materials is one of the more dangerous elements post-fire, as it can contaminate food. Any type of food stored in permeable packaging such as cardboard or plastic wrap should be tossed, as should any raw foods stored outside the refrigerator like potatoes or fruit.

Officials say that even food stored in refrigerators or freezers can become contaminated by fumes.

"The refrigerator seal isn't airtight and fumes can get inside," officials say. "If food from your refrigerator has an off-flavor or odor when it's prepared, throw it away."

Firefighting chemicals, meanwhile, can taint food and cookware. Chemicals can't be washed off food and thus food should be discarded, whether it's food stored at room temperature like fruits and vegetables or foods stored in permeable containers such as cardboard and screw-topped jars and bottles.

The good news is that canned goods and cookware exposed to chemicals can be decontaminated, officials say, by washing in a strong detergent solution and then dipping in a bleach solution (one tablespoon of unscented liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water) for 15 minutes.

Lastly, heat radiating from fires can spoil foods in cans or jars even if they appear to be OK.

"If the heat is extreme, the cans or jars themselves can split or rupture, rendering the food unsafe," officials say.

For more information or questions, call the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health at 1-800-722-4777.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20160826/public-health-officials-warn-of-food-safety-after-wildfire>

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## Pilot, Blue Cut fires bring back memories of 2003 Old fire

Michel Nolan, The Sun

Posted: August 27, 2016, 11:31 AM



The Blue Cut fire burns toward homes south of Highway 138 and east of Highway 2 on Aug. 17.



A firefighter passes engulfed trees on Highway 18 during the Old fire near Sky Forest, Tuesday, Oct. 28th 2003.

Smoke from the Pilot and Blue Cut fires still lingers, sparking memories of the horrific 2003 Old fire, which scorched 91,000 acres, killed six people and disrupted thousands of lives.

The word “wildfire” strikes fear in the minds of most mountain residents, leaving us with an uneasiness that lingers through the parched months of summer and fall.

The most recent of the catastrophic fires, the Blue Cut, was contained Tuesday, after burning almost 37,000 acres over seven days.

The Blue Cut fire raged through Cajon Pass and forced the evacuation of more than 82,000 residents. The blaze had officials saying it displayed “unprecedented growth” in its first few days.

Ashes fell in San Bernardino.

The week before, the Pilot fire charred more than 8,000 acres near Silverwood Lake. I could see the flames from that fire from the street I live on.

The sight of flames makes me queasy.

I still remember October 2007 and how the community reacted in disbelief when two fires destroyed homes in mountain communities.

The Grass Valley fire near Lake Arrowhead and the Slide fire in Green Valley Lake, Arrowbear and Running Springs ravaged the forest the same month.

Like for so many others, these fires are personal for me.

Anywhere is too close.

But the worst I've lived through was the Old Fire, ignited by an arsonist on Oct. 25, 2003 in the Waterman Canyon area of the San Bernardino Mountains.

It burned for nine days, destroying about 1,000 homes and leading to the evacuation of roughly 102,000.

I was one of those evacuees.

There's a surreal thought process you go through when you're told you must evacuate. You've seen others pack up on news programs but when it's you, there's a tendency to think "really?"

I did not lose my mountain home, but the fire destroyed a dozen homes on my street in the forest near Crestline.

I remember being in the newsroom, about four days after I evacuated, watching the fire consume a mountain home on television, colleagues asking if it were mine. At the time, I couldn't tell.

I wrote about it at the time — how it felt not to know — what so many others have recently endured while they waited.

"The nausea rises again in my throat, churning from the pit of my stomach where fear lives.

"Once again I've heard my home may be gone.

"Ultimately, when it's over, I may be just another statistic.

On the evening of Oct. 25, when I was forced to leave home, I headed to my daughter's home in San Diego where, by late the next morning, we were evacuated again as a churning column of flames and smoke from the Cedar Fire towered above her Tierrasanta neighborhood.

By 10:30 a.m., we packed up Dina's home and evacuated again, this time to the beach.

Running conversations on rimoftheworld.net were urgent as people waited for scarce snippets of news, starving for factual information about the condition of their area.

Nearly two weeks later, I got my CHP pass and messaged people on rimoftheworld.net that I was going up the mountain and would check on properties if anyone wanted me to.

Armed with a list of addresses, a colleague and I went up the hill and drove around, checking streets and addresses for damage in our little area of the mountain.

Per request, I fed a neighbor's chickens, checked someone else's tropical fish (that were not doing well in the cold November air) and verified that the "big yellow house was still big and yellow."

I had it easy — a little soot, a stinky refrigerator, but many hundreds of other people lost everything.

In all, I was evacuated for more than two weeks. Even though the fire was out, the transformer had been lost in the blaze and we weren't allowed back without the power on.

Banners hung from trees and on houses, thanking the incredible firefighters who sacrificed so much for our safety and well-being.

It was an emotional time.

Most of the families whose homes were destroyed have rebuilt. Others never did, leaving behind broken concrete foundations, overgrown by weeds rustling in the wind.

These latest wildfire victims will begin the long, arduous work of sifting through the ashes and rebuilding their lives.

And once again, the human spirit will rise up and inspire the rest of us.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20160827/pilot-blue-cut-fires-bring-back-memories-of-2003-old-fire>

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## **During Bluecut Fire, a homeless man, his dwelling saved**

*Barstow teacher recalls search for mentally ill father-in-law*

**Shea Johnson, Victor Valley Daily Press**

Posted: August 28, 2016, 4:33 PM



The shack in the desert east of the Summit Inn where Lesley McConnell's father-in-law lives. Photograph captured roughly 10 days after the Bluecut Fire started. Courtesy: Lesley McConnell

**HESPERIA** — On the evening of Aug. 16, Lesley McConnell, a teacher in Barstow, was rushing home here from work, drawing closer to carnage with each mile logged on southbound Interstate 15.

Less than two hours later, shortly before 7:47 p.m., the ravaging Bluecut Fire, which began that morning in the Cajon Pass, would swallow the iconic Summit Inn restaurant. In a desert shack east of Oak Hill Road, not far from the diner, lived McConnell's mentally ill father-in-law.

As the flames encroached upon his makeshift abode, fueled by dry brush and winds, he remained unaccounted for while dusk crept into night.

In an interview with the Daily Press and through a letter sent to this newspaper, the story of how McConnell's homeless father-in-law survived the 36,000-plus-acre blaze — his dwelling also saved from destruction by a man he hardly remembers — helps to illustrate the humanity of strangers in the face of chaos and uncertainty.

Sometime after 6 p.m., McConnell exited southbound I-15 at Main Street — realizing that the freeway was blocked off just 3.5 miles further south — where she traveled a back way to Rancho Road.

"There were cars and semis parked on both sides of Rancho, black smoke plummeting in the air. It looked quite apocalyptic," she wrote.

She attempted to turn south onto Mariposa Road toward Oak Hill Road, but was met by traffic cones cordoning off the path. Consumed by concern for the well-being of her father-in-law, a man in his mid- to late-sixties who suffers from schizophrenia, she said she didn't know whether he could cognitively digest what was occurring around him.

"My heart was racing," she wrote. "The devastation made it so real."

She pulled over her vehicle and walked to a man blocking the roadway, telling him her story and now almost in tears. He warned that it was impossible to get all the way to Oak Hill Road, but he allowed her through in her vehicle up to a roadblock a bit more south.

"As I drove out there, I could see flames and black smoke behind the lights of the road block," she wrote. "There were a lot of vehicles pulled to the side of Mariposa Road, watching and frightened of their own homes burning to the ground."

In a daze, she found a San Bernardino County Sheriff's deputy and repeated her story: She needed to make sure her father-in-law was all right. The deputy couldn't allow her to pass any further, however, because as McConnell put it: "(T)hat part of the desert was currently on fire."

The deputy took her father-in-law's name and the whereabouts of his camp site, vowing to pass along the message to other law enforcement and emergency personnel and assuring her that authorities were assessing the area.

"I felt helpless and prayed that he would get out of there," she wrote. "I did as much as I was allowed to do."

Later that night, a knock on the McConnell family door: Her father-in-law, "rough looking," but safe and seeking sleep. The next morning, he would tell McConnell and his son that he had been awakened by the sound of a tractor and much smoke. The man operating the tractor told him the desert was on fire and he must leave, driving him on the tractor to a main road, pledging he'd try his best to save where he lived.

His home is a blanket-draped tent with a mattress and small couch inside. Nearby, a fire pit had been constructed using bottles. He had only lived there specifically for six months or so, McConnell said, but he has found residence in that area for about a decade.

On Aug. 20, three days later, McConnell and her husband drove out to the area to see if the homestead still stood or, more likely, had fallen prey to the flames that destroyed in this region an estimated 110 homes, 216 outbuildings and over 200 vehicles.

"What we saw as we drove out there was pure devastation. The desert was blackened and desolate. We continued to look for his home, but thought the worst, after all everything was burnt," she wrote. "Then we saw it. The man on the tractor kept his promise. Everything around (my father-in-law's) makeshift home was burnt, but his home and his belongings were saved."

Judging by remnants of flames that left scars on the ground leading up to the dwelling, McConnell believes that the man must have used the tractor to dig a fire line around it.

She said her father-in-law has since returned to his little oasis in the desert. Yet because the Chevron gas station is now closed near the Summit Inn where he would often frequent for food and water, and had been "friendly with the people there," she supposed he may have to move.

"The compassion of the men who saved a homeless man's home and belongings brought a smile to (my husband and I)," she wrote. "This wasn't a home that contained expensive cars, furniture, electronics, and photos of children. This was a home that sheltered a homeless man.

"Humanity at its finest."



McConnell said she reached out to this newspaper to express her and her husband's gratitude to those that not only kept an eye on her father-in-law and saved his home, but to all who risked their lives fighting the BlueCut Fire.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20160828/during-bluecut-fire-homeless-man-his-dwelling-saved>

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## **Official: Protecting wildlife during a fire isn't a priority**

*Wildlife expert says it's best to 'let nature take its course'*

Charity Lindsey, Desert Dispatch

Posted: August 28, 2016, 12:01 AM



A rabbit looks for safe cover as flames from the Bluecut Fire surround it. James Quigg, Daily Press

With back-to-back wildfires devouring more than 44,000 acres of land in and around the Victor Valley this month, human inhabitants haven't been the only ones forced to evacuate. Along with the pets and livestock of more than 82,000 residents evacuated by the recently contained Bluecut Fire, wild animals of all kinds fled from their natural habitats in the wake of the fast-moving blaze.

The impact a fire has on wildlife probably isn't as serious as many might expect, however, according to officials with the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (DFW).

"First of all, during a fire, animals will get out of the way as fast as they can," DFW spokesman Andrew Hughan said. "They know their instincts."

Hughan said that DFW doesn't ever facilitate animal evacuations or replant or repopulate after a fire.

"We really just have to let nature take its course," Hughan said.

The greater damage to wildlife is not in actual deaths resulting from the fire directly, but from what it slowly does to the animal populations over time, as they have to resort to other food sources and habitats.

"They'll go to an existing habitat," Hughan said. "If a male runs out into another male's habitat, they'll fight it out and one of them ends up dead."

Hughan said there's no way to accurately gauge the total effect a wildfire has on animal and plant life.

No matter how cruel it may seem, however, the DFW urges people not to try to rescue a wild animal.

“We can’t put human lives at risk,” Hughan said. “Don’t try to help it. Don’t pick it up. As soon as you touch it, you’ve likely committed that animal to death because it will be rejected by the other animals. You have to leave it, even if it’s suffering, and let animal control professionals make a decision.”

The department advises that people keep their distance and call local animal control if they come across an injured animal.

Hughan said that the fire is more likely to hurt smaller animals like squirrels, raccoons and hedgehogs.

“The bigger the animal, the easier it is to escape,” Hughan said. “Even so, it’s not like officials find dead animals all over the place. Most of them sense it coming, and they run or they get underground. They can hold it out.”

Overall, protecting wildlife isn’t “a priority for any agency,” Hughan said — the priority is containing the fire and keeping people safe.

<http://www.desertdispatch.com/news/20160828/official-protecting-wildlife-during-fire-isnt-priority>

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## Driven to happiness

*With the fire out, Wrightwood celebrates annual car show*

Monica Solano

Posted: August 27, 2016, 8:44 PM



Cars and automobile enthusiasts flocked to Wrightwood on Saturday for the 22nd annual Mountain Classic Car Show. David Pardo, Press Dispatch

WRIGHTWOOD — With the Bluecut Fire now in the rearview mirror, High Desert residents gathered together in the streets of this small mountain community to thank local first responders and enjoy the 22nd annual Mountain Classic Car Show.

Hosted by the Wrightwood Chamber of Commerce, the event showcased 170 pre-1973 American hotrods, customs, classics, muscle cars and trucks as the highly anticipated show returned Saturday morning after the event faced a potential postponement or cancellation due to the fire.

“We’re happy to still be able to do this and it’s been fantastic seeing everyone come out and participate,” said Kelsey Merline, the Chamber’s office manager. “Last week was a bit hectic having to call all the vendors and those registering their cars and telling them not to come because of the fire. But we’re here today and even have signs on the highway saying thank you to those who helped stopped the fire.”

In addition to several vendors and organizations coming out for the event, **San Bernardino County Fire Department** First Responders also enjoyed a day out in the small town as they socialized and talked to guest in terms of what to do in during an emergency such as the Bluecut Fire.

“The first responders and every single person involved with helping to stop the fire were a really big help in protecting our small little town and community and it’s so great seeing the residents come out and give their thanks to them,” said Leslie Mihalko, media volunteer for the Chamber.

As residents made their way down the small town eyeing the model cars and visiting the booths set up for the annual event, Inland Empire United Way regional director Cari Thomas received donations from several people in order to help those who were affected by the fire.

A Poker Walk had residents take a game of chance where five businesses gave out one playing card each and the winner with the best hand won \$100. Also children of all ages participated in low-rider trike drag races at the "Pit Alley." Live entertainment was also provided by local band Music Formula.

Those who registered their vehicle for the show also participated in an Open Header contest in which the roar of the crowd determines the car with the loudest engine.

“I’ve been to many car shows whether big or small. I’ve never been to a bad one and the one here in Wrightwood is great,” said Gary Ricky, 51.

Steve Graham, 60, of Phelan, said he attends the annual car show every year and is happy to see the big turn out from the community after dealing with the devastating Bluecut Fire.

“The fire was pretty much right in front of my house when it was happening,” Graham said. “This is a great thing for the community seeing as they needed it after the fire. It’s definitely been great seeing everyone out and about enjoying themselves.”

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20160827/driven-to-happiness>

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## Girl, 15, killed in single-vehicle rollover near Baker

Jose Quintero, Victor Valley Daily Press

Posted: August 26, 2016, 5:00 PM



California Highway Patrol officers and **San Bernardino County Fire Department** firefighters respond to a single-vehicle rollover just south of Baker on Friday morning. Photo courtesy of San Bernardino County Fire Department

**BAKER** — A fatal, single-vehicle rollover on northbound Interstate 15 caused a significant traffic backup just south of Baker on Friday afternoon.

California Highway Patrol officers responded to the rollover involving a red 2010 Chevrolet Aveo at approximately 11:30 a.m. Officers learned the Chevy rolled over into the center divider, requiring the northbound No. 1 lane to be closed for over an hour. The No. 1 lane was reopened at 1:19 p.m. and traffic was reported to be backed up nearly two hours later 3 p.m.

Officers shut down both northbound lanes for about 15 minutes as a helicopter landed on the freeway to transport a 15-year-old girl, who was ejected from the Chevy, to University Medical Center in Las Vegas. The girl was pronounced dead at the trauma center, according to CHP spokesman Ryan Camara.

The 57-year-old driver and a 17-year-old girl suffered moderate injuries and were also transported by ambulance to University Medical Center. Camara said they were both wearing seat belts. The girl who was ejected was not wearing a seat belt, according to Camara.

The girl’s identity is being withheld pending positive identification and notification of her family.

The Chevy was traveling in the northbound No. 2 lane when the driver allowed the vehicle to drift to the right.

“Then the motorist tried to correct it and turned the car to the left but lost control of the vehicle,” Camara said. “The vehicle then entered the center dirt median and then overturned and landed in the median.”

Drugs and alcohol do not appear to be a factor and the rollover remained under investigation, Camara said.

This is the second fatal in as many days near Baker. A 64-year-old Utah resident and her dog were killed in a single-vehicle crash on northbound Interstate 15 early Thursday morning.

Officers responded to reports of a damaged vehicle sitting in the open desert just off I-15, north of Baker. Officers arrived and found Cindy Tolboe, who was identified by authorities Friday, dead in her 2013 Honda Accord that had been involved in a collision.

Camara said Tolboe was traveling northbound, near mile post marker 145, when the Accord traveled across the right-hand shoulder and into the open desert. Then the Honda became airborne after entering a dirt wash and striking a raised dirt embankment.

The Accord landed on its wheels but suffered major front end damage. The woman and her small dog were pronounced dead at the scene. Camara said drugs and alcohol do not appear to be a factor and the crash remains under investigation.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20160826/girl-15-killed-in-single-vehicle-rollover-near-baker>

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## Volunteers play key public safety role in rural communities

*Daggett, Yermo and Newberry Springs all rely on volunteer firefighters*

Mike Lamb, Victor Valle Daily Press

Posted: August 27, 2016, 12:01 AM



Newberry Springs volunteer firefighters work on maintaining extraction equipment Friday. Mike Lamb, Desert Dispatch

DAGGETT — Larry Menard was inside the Daggett Fire Department on a Sunday afternoon earlier this month when the fire call came in.

"I was at the station when a neighbor was yelling at me about a fire. And I said OK," Menard said.

The home was just down the street from the station, but Menard recalls it was already fully engulfed.

"We protected the other houses and the other agencies came out. They all did an outstanding job. All of them," Menard said.

Menard is one of three volunteers at the station, which handles about 150 to 200 calls a year. Some of the other agencies that came to help fight the Daggett fire are made up of volunteers as well.

Neighboring communities Newberry Springs and Yermo are all protected by volunteer fire departments. There are mutual aid agreements with the Marine Corps Logistics Base, **San Bernardino County Fire Department** and the Barstow Fire Protection District. But on a daily basis, volunteers are the first to respond to any emergency in Daggett, Yermo or Newberry Springs.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, 66 percent of all fire departments in the United States are manned by volunteers. These departments, usually in rural areas, protect about 19 percent of the U.S. population. But without these services provided by volunteers, living in rural areas would be a lot more dangerous.

Often times these volunteer fire departments face daunting tasks. Distance is a major challenge for Newberry Springs, which handles about 300 calls a year.

"Newberry has 117 square miles," Newberry Springs Fire Chief Steve Miller said. "We have travel distances from the station to some points of the district that are 15 to 20 minutes because of the roads (some are dirt roads) and the distance.

"You don't want to break a axle. People don't generally understand that," he said. "Sometimes that's a hard lesson for them. We do the best we can."

Miller said funding is one of the major issues facing small volunteer fire departments. He said equipment and training for just one firefighter can reach costs up to \$125,000 or more a year. It depends on the level of training. All three departments seek federal and state grant money.

Miller said most volunteer firefighters are trained for basic life support. He said very few volunteer firefighters have advance life support certificates.

But it's just not the costs that make it hard on rural communities. Finding volunteers willing to give up hours at a time to man stations and go on emergency runs is becoming more challenging as well, Miller and others said. More people are working multiple jobs just to pay the bills.

"It's getting harder all the time," Miller said. He has 16 volunteers presently on his active roster.

"The working class, their disposable income is less and less year after year. They are just not keeping up with the cost of living. So it's getting harder. And people are less community orientated. We have generations now hooked up to the TV, Xboxes, Nintendo and all the other stuff and don't think about the outside world."

Yermo Community Service District Fire Commissioner Gary Yearsley agrees. He said he has 11 active firefighters on his roster. His department also responds to about 250 to 300 calls a year.

"People are basically getting two jobs to make ends meet," Yearsley said. "We lost some of the local people that way. We picked up some from out of the district. It makes it harder to schedule and get them in to make enough (firefighters) to cover."

Yearsley's biggest need right now is a fire chief. Yearsley said the chief has to be somebody with experience in all areas of emergency response, but willing to work for free.

"We hope to find someone who has already done it as a career chief or assistant chief in a paid station, or even a volunteer station."

Politics can be a stumbling block as well. All three departments are part of community service districts governed by an elected board of directors.

Yermo has suffered through two years of political and legal turmoil. The district faces a wrongful death and a wrongful termination lawsuit. Both involve the fire department.

The district also has gone through three different fire chiefs in a year's time. At one point, the president of the board also served as the fire chief. A June recall election has changed the direction of the board.

Meanwhile, Newberry Springs suffered through some political turmoil resulting in the district losing two water trucks in a district without water hydrants.

"The culture of the community makes the difference," Miller said. "It comes down to having leadership and having a well-managed program. If you let your program run wild, that's exactly what you are going to have."

Yearsley said he believes Yermo's leadership and fire department is on the right track.

"We are starting at the bottom and working up. We are without a chief right now, but we will keep looking until we find one. In the meantime, we are just looking for people to get back to strength.

"We are not missing any runs right now. But the key is to make sure we are taking care of the community."

Yearsley encourages anybody who has time to volunteer to consider their local fire department.

"Anybody can do this. Anybody can help. I don't think they understand this. I think a lot of times, the community thinks they have to be fully trained," he said. "I would rather have someone come in that is willing to work and wants to learn. I would love to get more involvement in our communities."

Miller said it's critical to have trained volunteers throughout the community. Often times, he said a trained volunteer can respond from home to an emergency a couple blocks away and start CPR while waiting for the emergency crew from the station to arrive.

"We are rural. You can go in and start CPR," he said.

Despite the challenges, Miller, Menard and Yearsley said years of service has been worth it.

"The things you get to see is worth much more than the things you get paid for. You get value out of helping people. It's kind of addicting," Yearsley said.

"Every time you go on a run, it's something different. You learn. You absorb it," Menard said.

With 30 years of firefighting service, Miller is the senior member of the three. He says children and adults have come up to him at a grocery store to thank him again for responding to their emergencies.

"I went on a call. An 8-year-old boy went into the bathroom to do his thing. He pulled the door closed and went to lock it. The doorknob came out inside. Well that locked the door. He couldn't open the door to get out. Mom couldn't open the door to get in. The two were absolutely panicked.

"They called 911. We responded. It was really nothing more than using a piece of metal to do the credit card trick on the door. But the look on the two faces was priceless. And over the years I have seen that look a hundred times."

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20160827/volunteers-play-key-public-safety-role-in-rural-communities>

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## Several Families Displaced After Apartment Fire in Victorville

Hugo C Valdez, Victor Valley News Group

Posted: August 27, 2016



(photo by Hugo C. Valdez, Victor Valley News)

VICTORVILLE, Calif:(VVNG.com)- A late night apartment fire in Victorville left several families displaced.

Just before 1:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 27th firefighters responded to the North Port Apartments on the 14000 block of Rodeo Drive reference multiple reports of a fire.

Upon arrival, firefighters located an upstairs apartment with flames coming out of the windows.

**San Bernardino County Fire** Captain Jason Serrano said, all occupants of the entire structure had been evacuated by Sheriff's deputies prior to the fire departments arrival.

"Our priority is to rescue anyone that is in any potential danger," stated Cpt. Serrano.

Using an aerial ladder the truck crew cut a hole in the roof and allowed the heat to ventilate, a common practice known by firefighters as "vertical ventilation."

A total of 31 firefighters responded, including five paramedic engine companies, three paramedic trucks, and they were assisted by one engine from Apple Valley Fire District.

Firefighters managed to knock down the fire in approximately 25 minutes.

The 2nd alarm commercial structure fire was contained to one unit and did not spread laterally into adjacent units, stated Serrano.

According to Public Information Officer Jeff Allen, reports were received that a person was seen jumping from an upstairs window.

The occupant of the apartment suffered minor injuries and was transported to a local hospital. Her injuries are nothing serious, stated Allen.

As a result of the fire, multiple people were displaced and will seek assistance from the American Red Cross or stay with family members.

The cause of the fire is currently under investigation.

<http://www.vvng.com/several-families-displaced-after-apartment-fire-in-victorville/>